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ART. I.—*Irving's Alhambra.*

The Alhambra; a Series of Tales and Sketches of the Moors and Spaniards. By the AUTHOR of the Sketch Book. 2 vols., 12mo. Philadelphia, 1832.

Our last notice of Mr. Irving was taken on the occasion of the publication of the History of Columbus. This was the first and richest fruit of his researches in Spain. We have since been successively presented with the Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada, the History of the Voyages of the Companions of Columbus, and the work before us. The general favor with which these productions have all been received, both at home and abroad, and the great notoriety which the name of the author has now attained, render it superfluous for us to dwell particularly upon the character and contents of each. But we cannot refuse ourselves the pleasure of bearing our humble part in the cordial welcome, with which the unanimous voice of the country is now greeting the distinguished pilgrim on his return from abroad.

The first works which Mr. Irving published, after his visit to Spain, had no immediate connexion with his own residence there, except that by composing them upon the spot where the scenes are laid, he had access to materials which he could not otherwise have consulted. They were drawn chiefly from ancient documents, either printed or man-

uscript, and afforded the author but little opportunity for turning to account his own observations on the present state of Spain and the Spaniards. It was natural, however, to suppose that so accurate and attentive an observer of men and nature would not have passed so long a time in the midst of scenes so remote from the common track of travellers, without bringing away a rich treasure of notes and recollections. The account of his excursion from Seville to Palos and the Convent of La Rabida, which was appended to the *History of the Companions of Columbus*, gave a foretaste of what we might expect in this way, and the present work justifies the expectations which that charming little sketch was fitted to raise. Even this work is, we trust, only a forerunner to others of the same class. It is, in fact, confined to a single point in the author's Spanish travels, being devoted entirely to a description of his journey from Seville to Granada, and a record of his domestic adventures and poetical musings among the ruins of the ancient palace of the Alhambra, which constitute the principal curiosity of that city. There are various other scenes in the track which Mr. Irving pursued in Spain, not inferior either in natural beauties or historical associations to Granada, and which would afford an equally favorable canvass for the embroidery of his brilliant and many-colored sketches. From the mountain capital of Toledo, where Roderic, the last of the Goths, beheld, in the magic mirror of black marble, prophetic images of the future fortunes of his country, to the Pillars of Hercules on the one hand and the passes of Fontarabia and Perpignan on the other, the whole Peninsula is peopled, as it were, with historical and poetical memorials.

At the point of time when history first throws a clear light on the course of past events, we find Iberia employed by the two great rival republics of that day, as the field upon which they contended for the empire of the world. The genius of Rome prevailed, but had scarcely begun to repose from the toils of conquest, when the political fabric, which it had cost the persevering exertion of a thousand years to erect, crumbled into fragments. During the convulsive struggles of the following period, the Peninsula became again the great battle-ground of the ancient world. Two distinct races of men, one issuing from the frozen recesses of the North, and the other from the burning deserts of Arabia and Ethiopia, met upon

the plains of Castile and rushed into conflict, with a fury proportional to the lofty semi-barbarous spirit and fanatical enthusiasm of both. In this encounter the advantage remained, for a long time at least, on the side of Africa. The Moors overran the whole Peninsula, except the fastnesses of the Asturian mountains, founded kingdoms in all quarters, and maintained their position for more than seven hundred years. It was not, in fact, until they had become enervated by a long career of refinement and luxury, that the hardier Goths succeeded in dislodging them from their splendid cities, and exiling them again to the Libyan deserts from which their ancestors proceeded.

The period of the Moorish ascendancy is, perhaps, the most interesting in the annals of Spain, and would furnish a fit subject for a more methodical, extensive and elaborate historical description, than has yet been given of it in any language. With little pretensions to the sound judgment, and strong practical sense, which have enabled their northern rivals to establish systems of polity on broad and durable foundations, the Moors exhibited a dauntless bravery, a high sense of honor, a wild vigor of imagination, and an elegance of taste, which throw a vivid poetical light over the course of their adventures. While under their sway, Spain was undoubtedly the most highly civilized portion of Europe. The schools of Cordova were the fountains of science, and the courts of Seville and Granada the standards of art and fashion, for all the West. The most illustrious of the Gothic warriors is known to us by the title of honor, which was awarded to him by the generous admiration of his enemies. Under the immediate successors of the Moorish Princes, Spain still retained her commanding position in the Commonwealth of Europe. From the period of the conquest of Granada till the close of the religious wars, she was at the head of the policy, the learning and the arts of Christendom, and took the lead in extending them over the new-found regions of Asia and America. It is only within the last two centuries, that, under the government of a new race of sluggard kings, she has gradually sunk from her high estate, forfeited her pre-eminence in arts and arms, and having finally lost her immense colonial possessions, that still gave her, even after she was deprived of every other element of power, an unnatural importance, seems to be fast reaching the

condition of hopeless decrepitude and 'mere oblivion,' which, with nations as with individuals, form the

———last scene of all
That ends this strange eventful history.

This long and interesting series of events has, however, —as we have already remarked,—in a manner, covered the whole surface of the Peninsula with poetical and historical memorials, and connected the name of every mountain, river, hill and valley with some great character, or extraordinary incident. The monuments that indicate the successive predominance of different and hostile races often stand in the immediate neighborhood of each other, like the tombs of adverse statesmen, who, after a long life of contention for place and influence, repose at last, side by side, in the same common cemetery. At Segovia, for example, the traveller finds grouped together, within a distance of one or two miles, a Gothic Cathedral, a Moorish Alcazar, or Palace, and a Roman Aqueduct ; all in complete preservation, and among the finest specimens of their respective styles of construction, existing in Europe. While these magnificent works attest the former grandeur and wealth of the city,—once a royal residence and one of the principal seats of manufactures, —a few hundred wretched hovels collected around them, which seem to be crumbling to atoms with neglect and age, sufficiently prove the extent of its present decay. Such is the case throughout all Spain.

This air of desolation, which characterizes the whole face of the country, gives a sort of relief to the antiquarian monuments with which it is covered, and adds new interest to the historical and poetical associations connected with them. It is only, in fact, under such circumstances, that scenes and associations of this description produce their true effect. Where the business of life is in full activity, in all its various branches of politics, traffic, arts and war, the mind is too much distracted with present interests, to devote its attention very seriously to any others. It is only when we leave the seats of these agonizing struggles, and thus escape, for a time, from their influence, that we begin to brood with undivided intensity of thought and feeling upon the memory of the past, and the mysterious promise of the future. Hence, the poet, who finds his element in such contemplations, wanders about 'amid the crowd, the hum, the shock of men,' like

a stranger ; but breathes more freely, and feels himself at home, and at ease, upon the trackless waste of the ocean, amid the vast forests, and beside the unexplored rivers of a new continent, or in scenes where solitude and silence spread their melancholy pall over the mouldering monuments of departed greatness and beauty.

Mr. Irving, who possesses the true poetical temperament, must therefore have found, in every part of the Spanish Peninsula, abundant materials for his sketches ; and we may confidently anticipate that other collections will follow that with which he has now favored us. It is hardly reasonable, however, to call upon him for more works, before we have fairly noticed this ; and we therefore hasten, without farther preface, to the immediate subject of the present article.

The work before us contains, as we have already remarked, a description of the author's journey from Seville to Granada, and an account of his residence in the Alhambra, interspersed with some of the legends of love and war, of hidden treasures, magic spells, and spectral apparitions, in which the Arabians took so much delight, and which are still current, wherever they were established. The dedication is addressed to Mr. Wilkie, the *facile princeps* of the present race of British painters, who visited Spain during Mr. Irving's residence there, and accompanied him on some of his excursions. The amiable character and unaffectedly cordial manner of this eminent artist naturally invited a compliment, which his high talents and reputation so well justify.* The expedition, which forms the subject of the work, was undertaken by Mr. Irving in company with a fellow-traveller, of whom he speaks in the following terms.

'In the spring of 1829, the author of this work, whom curiosity had brought into Spain, made a rambling expedition from Seville to Granada, in company with a friend, a member of the Russian embassy at Madrid. Accident had thrown us together from distant regions of the globe, and a similarity of taste led us to wan-

*In representing Wilkie as the prince of British painters, we of course do not include among them our distinguished countrymen, Allston, Leslie, and Newton. These are all, like Wilkie, artists of the first class ; and it is not for us to undertake to settle their respective claims to precedence, as compared with him, or among themselves. We are glad to learn that Newton is at length turning his thoughts homeward, and that, at some not very distant period, he may probably be induced to fix his residence among us.

der together among the romantic mountains of Andalusia. Should these pages meet his eye, wherever thrown by the duties of his station, whether mingling in the pageantry of courts or meditating on the truer glories of nature, may they recall the scenes of our adventurous companionship, and with them the remembrance of one, in whom neither time nor distance will obliterate the recollection of his gentleness and worth.'

We are informed that the person here alluded to is Prince Dolgorúky, a young member of the great Russian family of that name, justly esteemed by all who have had the pleasure of his acquaintance, for his agreeable manners, and highly cultivated mind. He has since been advanced to the place of *Chargé d'Affaires* of his government at the Hague; and will doubtless become one of the political and literary ornaments of his country. It was certainly a singular combination of chances, which brought a Sclavonian nobleman from the heart of Muscovy, and an English poet from the shores of the New World, to dwell together in peaceable companionship, though only for a few weeks, in a Moorish palace, situated in the centre of Christian Spain. Mr. Irving, with reference to himself alone, describes the event as the accomplishment of one of the cherished dreams of his childish fancy.

'I tread haunted ground, and am surrounded by romantic associations. From earliest boyhood, when, on the banks of the Hudson, I first pored over the pages of an old Spanish story about the wars of Granada, that city has ever been a subject of my waking dreams, and often have I trod in fancy the romantic halls of the Alhambra. Behold for once a day-dream realized; yet I can scarcely credit my senses, or believe that I do indeed inhabit the palace of Boabdil, and look down from its balconies upon chivalric Granada. As I loiter through the oriental chambers, and hear the murmuring of fountains and the song of the nightingale: as I inhale the odor of the rose, and feel the influence of the balmy climate, I am almost tempted to fancy myself in the Paradise of Mahomet, and that the plump little Dolores is one of the bright-eyed Houris, destined to administer to the happiness of true believers.'

The introductory chapter, which narrates the events of the journey from Seville to Granada, is one of the most agreeable in the book. In general, we think that Mr. Irving's style is more nervous and spirited, when he is employed in embellishing facts that have come within his own observation, than

when he attempts a wholly fictitious narrative. There is great truth in the remarks at the commencement on the general characteristics of the Spanish landscape. Those persons who have gone to Spain,—as has doubtless happened with many travellers,—in the expectation of finding in so southerly a climate something like the rich luxuriance of tropical vegetation, must have been sadly disappointed by the stern and sombre reality. The soil of Spain is elevated and rocky, and the great heat, which, in a low and moist country, would stimulate vegetation, produces, by increasing the dryness, an opposite effect. The mountains of Guipuscoa and Biscay are thinly covered with pines; but as the traveller advances into the country, they gradually disappear, and on the vast central plateau of Old and New Castile, there is hardly a tree to be seen. In and about Madrid, there are a few public walks planted with trees; but such of them as are not situated immediately on the banks of the river, require to be watered every day during the hot season. The beautiful valley of Aranjuez, in which the waters of the Jarama meet with those of the Tagus, and which is laid out in ornamental grounds for the purpose of a royal residence, is almost the only spot in the Peninsula, where vegetation assumes a really flourishing and palmy state. Even on the banks of the Guadalquivir, where the country is comparatively low and moist, there is nothing like the exuberant richness of the American forest. The same causes which check vegetation, make the rivers shallow and scanty. In summer, many of them are reduced to a few threads of water, working their way painfully through intervening beds of sand. Such is the case with the Manzanares, on the banks of which the capital is situated; and an English writer of high pretensions positively affirms, that when the late queen made her *entrée* into the city, the bed of the river was watered, that her majesty might not be incommoded with the dust.* But of this, notwithstanding the authority of Mr. Ward, and the well-known veracity of all British travellers, we must be permitted to doubt. However this may be, the stranger, who has been accustomed to the freshness of a

* Mr. Ward, lately Chargé d' Affaires of Great Britain in Mexico, who makes this statement in a note to his work upon that country. The road from France by which the queen entered Madrid does not approach the river.

more genial climate, is often tempted to exclaim, in the language of the Latin poet,

—O qui me gelidis in vallibus Hæmi
Sistat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbra!

The absence of trees and the dry and rocky nature of the soil, to which we have now alluded, appear to be the principal causes of the sombre and monotonous character of the landscape, which is so well described in the following extract.

‘Before setting forth, let me indulge in a few previous remarks on Spanish scenery and Spanish travelling. Many are apt to picture Spain to their imaginations as a soft southern region, decked out with all the luxuriant charms of voluptuous Italy. On the contrary, though there are exceptions in some of the maritime provinces, yet, for the greater part, it is a stern, melancholy country, with rugged mountains and long, naked, sweeping plains, destitute of trees, and invariably silent and lonesome, partaking of the savage and solitary character of Africa. What adds to this silence and loneliness, is the absence of singing birds, a natural consequence of the want of groves and hedges. The vulture and the eagle are seen wheeling about the mountain-cliffs and soaring over the plains, and groups of shy bustards stalk about the heaths; but the myriads of smaller birds, which animate the whole face of other countries, are met with in but few provinces of Spain, and in them chiefly among the orchards and gardens which surround the habitations of man.

‘In the exterior provinces, the traveller occasionally traverses great tracts cultivated with grain as far as the eye can reach, waving at times with verdure, at other times naked and sun-burnt; but he looks round in vain for the hand that has tilled the soil; at length he perceives some village perched on a steep hill, or rugged crag, with mouldering battlements and ruined watch-tower; a strong-hold, in old times, against civil war or Moorish inroad; for the custom among the peasantry of congregating together for mutual protection, is still kept up in most parts of Spain, in consequence of the maraudings of roving freebooters.

‘But though a great part of Spain is deficient in the garniture of groves and forests, and the softer charms of ornamental cultivation, yet its scenery has something of a high and lofty character to compensate the want. It partakes something of the attributes of its people, and I think that I better understand the proud, hardy, frugal and abstemious Spaniard, his manly defiance

of hardships, and contempt of effeminate indulgences, since I have seen the country he inhabits.

‘There is something, too, in the sternly simple features of the Spanish landscape, that impresses on the soul a feeling of sublimity. The immense plains of the Castiles and La Mancha, extending as far as the eye can reach, derive an interest from their very nakedness and immensity, and have something of the solemn grandeur of the ocean. In ranging over these boundless wastes, the eye catches sight, here and there, of a straggling herd of cattle attended by a lonely herdsman, motionless as a statue, with his long slender pike tapering up like a lance into the air; or beholds a long train of mules slowly moving along the waste, like a train of camels in a desert, or a single herdsman, armed with blunderbuss and stiletto, and prowling over the plain. Thus, the country, the habits, the very looks of the people, have something of the Arabian character. The general insecurity of the country is evinced in the universal use of weapons. The herdsman in the field, the shepherd in the plain, has his musket and his knife. The wealthy villager rarely ventures to the market-town without his trabucho, and, perhaps, a servant on foot with a blunderbuss on his shoulder; and the most petty journey is undertaken with the preparations of a warlike enterprise.

‘The dangers of the road produce, also, a mode of travelling, resembling, on a diminutive scale, the caravans of the East. The arrieros or carriers congregate in troops, and set off in large and well-armed trains on appointed days, while individual travellers swell their number, and contribute to their strength. In this primitive way is the commerce of the country carried on. The muleteer is the general medium of traffic, and the legitimate wanderer of the land, traversing the Peninsula from the Pyrenees and the Asturias, to the Alpuxarras, the Serrania de Ronda, and even to the gates of Gibraltar. He lives frugally and hardily; his alforjas (or saddle-bags,) of coarse cloth hold his scanty stock of provisions; a leathern bottle hanging at his saddle-bow contains wine or water for a supply across barren mountains and thirsty plains; a mule-cloth spread upon the ground is his bed at night, and his pack-saddle is his pillow. His low but clear-limbed and sinewy form betokens strength; his complexion is dark and sun-burnt; his eye resolute, but quiet in its expression, except when kindled by sudden emotion; his demeanor is frank, manly, and courteous, and he never passes you without a grave salutation—“Dios guarda à usted!”—“Vay usted con Dios caballero!”—“God guard you!”—“God be with you, cavalier!”

‘As these men have often their whole fortune at stake upon

the burden of their mules, they have their weapons at hand, slung to their saddles, and ready to be snatched down for desperate defence. But their united numbers render them secure against petty bands of marauders; and the solitary bandalero, armed to the teeth, and mounted on his Andalusian steed, hovers about them, like a pirate about a merchant convoy, without daring to make an assault.

'The Spanish muleteer has an inexhaustible stock of songs and ballads, with which to beguile his incessant way-faring. The airs are rude and simple, consisting of but few inflexions. These he chants forth with a loud voice, and long drawling cadence, seated sideways on his mule, who seems to listen with infinite gravity, and to keep time with his paces, to the tune. The couplets thus chanted are often old traditional romances about the Moors; or some legend of a saint; or some love ditty; or, what is still more frequent, some ballad about a bold contrabandista, or hardy bandalero; for the smuggler and the robber are poetical heroes among the common people of Spain. Often the song of the muleteer is composed at the instant, and relates to some local scene, or some incident of the journey. This talent of singing and improvising is frequent in Spain, and is said to have been inherited from the Moors. There is something wildly pleasing in listening to these ditties among the rude and lonely scenes they illustrate, accompanied as they are, by the occasional jingle of the mule-bell.

'It has a most picturesque effect, also, to meet a train of muleteers in some mountain pass. First you hear the bells of the leading mules, breaking with their simple melody the stillness of the airy height; or, perhaps, the voice of the muleteer admonishing some tardy or wandering animal, or chanting, at the full stretch of his lungs, some traditional ballad. At length you see the mules s'owly winding along the craggy defile, sometimes descending precipitous cliffs, so as to present themselves in full relief against the sky, sometimes toiling up the deep arid chasms below you. As they approach, you descry their gay decorations of worsted tufts, tassels, and saddle-cloths; while, as they pass by, the ever ready trabucho, slung behind their packs and saddles, gives a hint of the insecurity of the road.

'The ancient kingdom of Granada, into which we are about to penetrate, is one of the most mountainous regions of Spain. Vast sierras or chains of mountains, destitute of shrub or tree, and mottled with variegated marbles and granites, elevate their sun-burnt summits against a deep blue sky, yet in their rugged bosoms lie engulfed the most verdant and fertile valleys, where the desert and the garden strive for mastery, and the very rock,

as it were, is compelled to yield the fig, the orange, and the citron, and to blossom with the myrtle and the rose.

‘In the wild passes of these mountains, the sight of walled towns and villages, built like eagles’ nests among the cliffs, and surrounded by Moorish battlements, or of ruined watch-towers perched on lofty peaks, carry the mind back to the chivalrous days of Christian and Moslem warfare, and to the romantic struggle for the conquest of Granada. In traversing their lofty sierras, the traveller is often obliged to alight and lead his horse up and down the steep and jagged ascents and descents, resembling the broken steps of a staircase. Sometimes the road winds along dizzy precipices, without parapet to guard him from the gulfs below, and then will plunge down steep and dark and dangerous declivities. Sometimes it struggles through rugged barrancos, or ravines, worn by water torrents, the obscure paths of the contrabandista; while ever and anon, the ominous cross, the memento of robbery and murder, erected on a mound of stones at some lonely part of the road, admonishes the traveller that he is among the haunts of banditti; perhaps, at that very moment, under the eye of some lurking bandalero. Sometimes, in winding through the narrow valleys, he is startled by a hoarse bellowing, and beholds above him, on some green fold of the mountain side, a herd of fierce Andalusian bulls, destined for the combat of the arena. There is something awful in the contemplation of these terrific animals, clothed with tremendous strength, and ranging their native pastures, in untamed wildness: strangers almost to the face of man. They know no one but the solitary herdsman who attends upon them, and even he at times dares not venture to approach them. The low bellowings of these bulls, and their menacing aspect as they look down from their rocky height, give additional wildness to the savage scenery around.’

After describing his journey to Granada, Mr. Irving proceeds to the principal subject of the work, and gives an account, in a series of detached articles, of the Alhambra, of the persons by whom it is now tenanted, and of his own occupations and amusements while he resided among them, interspersed with tales founded on the local traditions of the vicinity. It would be superfluous to follow the ingenious and elegant author in detail through the several portions of a work, which has already preceded our notice in the hands of most of our readers. It is marked substantially with the qualities that distinguished his former productions of the same class, excepting that there is no mixture of the pathetic. The tone

is throughout light and pleasant, and the tales are all, if we rightly recollect, of a comic cast. We are not sure that this tone is quite in keeping with the character of the subject; and if there be any defect in the general conception of the work, it consists in selecting the ruins of a celebrated ancient palace, which seem to lead more naturally to grave meditations on the fall of empires, and melancholy musings on the frailty of human greatness, as the scene of a series of sportive caricatures and comic stories. It is pleasant enough, on this view of the matter, that a patriotic citizen of the great and flourishing Republic of the Western world, while wandering through the splendid royal halls, whose present dilapidated condition serves as a memorial of one of the political movements that have changed the face of society, instead of turning his thoughts upon the high concerns of Church and State, should be chiefly occupied with the personal characters and little domestic arrangements of the house-keeper's family, the humors of honest Mateo Ximenes, the Tertulias of aunt Antonia, and the truant pigeon of her attractive niece, 'the merry-hearted little Dolores.' We are reminded of the simple exultation with which the Italian peasant prefers his own humble cottage to the magnificent, but to him incomprehensible structures, under the ruins of which it is erected.

There in the ruins, heedless of the dead,
The shelter-seeking peasant builds his shed;
And, wondering man could want the larger pile,
Exults and owns his cottage with a smile.

A work, conceived and executed in a tone like that of M. de Châteaubriand's *Abencerrages*, would have been undoubtedly more germane to the genius of the place where the scene is laid. But such is Mr. Irving. The high and deep things, whether of philosophy or feeling, are in a great measure foreign to him; and, as he more than intimates in the present work by several sly innuendoes about metaphysics, are, in his opinion, secrets not worth knowing. In the midst of the scenes and objects that most naturally suggest them, he reverts instinctively to the lights and shadows that play upon the surface of social life. He returns from the 'strong hold of old Ali-Atar, the father-in-law of Boabdil, whence that fiery veteran sallied forth with his son-in-law on that disastrous inroad, that ended in the death of the chieftain

and the capture of the monarch,' to tell us that the inn is kept by a young and handsome Andalusian widow with a trim basquina. When he thinks of the Alhambra hereafter, it will be 'to remember the lovely little Carmen, sporting in happy and innocent girlhood in its marble halls, dancing to the sound of the Moorish castanets, or mingling the silver warbling of her voice with the music of the fountains.' In all this, there is perhaps some little incongruity ; but the spirit and beauty of the style render the work so agreeable, that, in reading it, we forget the defect, if such it can be called, of the plan, and would perhaps regret to have it any other than it is.

The best articles are those, in which the author gives a description of scenes and persons that have come directly within his own observation : such as the Journey, the Balcony, the Haunted Tower, the Author's Chamber, and the Visitors. Although some of these subjects might appear, as we have intimated, light and trifling, if viewed under the impression of the feelings most natural to the scene, they are all wrought up with great felicity, and are among the most finished and elegant specimens of style to be found in the language. We extract the Author's Chamber, not as the best, but as one which is best fitted by its length for quotation.

'On taking up my abode in the Alhambra, one end of a suite of empty chambers of modern architecture, intended for the residence of the governor, was fitted up for my reception. It was in front of the palace, looking forth upon the esplanade. The farther end communicated with a cluster of little chambers, partly Moorish, partly modern, inhabited by Tia Antonia and her family. These terminated in a large room, which serves the good old dame for parlor, kitchen and hall of audience. It had boasted of some splendor in time of the Moors, but a fire-place had been built in one corner, the smoke from which had discolored the walls, nearly obliterated the ornaments, and spread a sombre tint over the whole. From these gloomy apartments, a narrow blind corridor and a dark winding stair-case led down an angle of the tower of Comares ; groping down which, and opening a small door at the bottom, you are suddenly dazzled by emerging into the brilliant antechamber of the hall of ambassadors, with the fountain of the court of the Alberca sparkling before you.

'I was dissatisfied with being lodged in a modern and frontier

apartment of the palace, and longed to ensconce myself in the very heart of the building.

‘As I was rambling one day about the Moorish halls, I found, in a remote gallery, a door which I had not before noticed, communicating apparently with an extensive apartment, locked up from the public. Here then was a mystery. Here was the haunted wing of the castle. I procured the key, however, without difficulty. The door opened to a range of vacant chambers of European architecture; though built over a Moorish arcade, along the little garden of Lindaraxa. There were two lofty rooms, the ceilings of which were of deep panel work of cedar, richly and skilfully carved with fruits and flowers, intermingled with grotesque masks or faces; but broken in many places. The walls had evidently, in ancient times, been hung with damask, but were now naked, and scrawled over with the insignificant names of aspiring travellers; the windows, which were dismantled and open to wind and weather, looked into the garden of Lindaraxa, and the orange and citron trees flung their branches into the chambers. Beyond these rooms were two saloons, less lofty, looking also into the garden. In the compartments of the panelled ceiling were baskets of fruit and garlands of flowers, painted by no mean hand, and in tolerable preservation. The walls had also been painted in fresco in the Italian style, but the paintings were nearly obliterated. The windows were in the same shattered state as in the other chambers.

‘This fanciful suite of rooms terminated in an open gallery with balustrades, which ran at right angles along another side of the garden. The whole apartment had a delicacy and elegance in its decorations, and there was something so choice and sequestered in its situation, along this retired little garden, that awakened an interest in its history. I found, on inquiry, that it was an apartment fitted up by Italian artists, in the early part of the last century, at the time when Philip V. and the beautiful Elizabetta of Parma were expected at the Alhambra; and was destined for the queen and the ladies of her train. One of the loftiest chambers had been her sleeping-room, and a narrow staircase leading from it, though now walled up, opened to the delightful belvedere, originally a mirador of the Moorish sultanas, but fitted up as a boudoir for the fair Elizabetta, and which still retains the name of the Tocador, or toilette of the queen. The sleeping-room I have mentioned commanded from one window a prospect of the Generaliffe, and its imbowered terraces; under another window played the alabaster fountain of the garden of Lindaraxa. That garden carried my thoughts still farther back, to the period of another reign of beauty; to the days of the Moorish sultanas.

"How beauteous is this garden!" says an Arabic inscription, "where the flowers of the earth vie with the stars of heaven! What can compare with the vase of yon alabaster fountain, filled with crystal water? Nothing but the moon in her fulness, shining in the midst of an unclouded sky!"

'Centuries had elapsed, yet how much of this scene of apparently fragile beauty remained! The garden of Lindaraxa was still adorned with flowers; the fountain still presented its crystal mirror: it is true, the alabaster had lost its whiteness, and the basin beneath, overrun with weeds, had become the nestling-place of the lizard; but there was something in the very decay that enhanced the interest of the scene, speaking, as it did, of that mutability which is the irrevocable lot of man and all his works. The desolation, too, of these chambers, once the abode of the proud and elegant Elizabetta, had a more touching charm for me than if I had beheld them in their pristine splendor, glittering with the pageantry of a court.—I determined at once to take up my quarters in this apartment.

'My determination excited great surprise in the family; who could not imagine any rational inducement for the choice of so solitary, remote and forlorn an apartment. The good Tia Antonia considered it highly dangerous. The neighborhood, she said, was infested by vagrants; the caverns of the adjacent hills swarmed with gipsies; the palace was ruinous and easy to be entered in many parts; and the rumor of a stranger quartered alone in one of the ruined apartments, out of the hearing of the rest of the inhabitants, might tempt unwelcome visitors in the night, especially as foreigners are always supposed to be well stocked with money. Dolores represented the frightful loneliness of the place; nothing but bats and owls flitting about; then there were a fox and a wild cat, that kept about the vaults and roamed about at night.

'I was not to be diverted from my humor; so, calling in the assistance of a carpenter, and the ever officious Mateo Ximenes, the doors and windows were soon placed in a state of tolerable security.

'With all these precautions, I must confess the first night I passed in these quarters was inexpressibly dreary. I was escorted by the whole family to my chamber, and their taking leave of me, and retiring along the waste antechamber and echoing galleries, reminded me of those hobgoblin stories, where the hero is left to accomplish the adventure of a haunted house.

'Soon the thoughts of the fair Elizabetta and the beauties of her court, who had once graced these chambers, now by a perversion of fancy added to the gloom. Here was the scene of

their transient gaiety and loveliness; here were the very traces of their elegance and enjoyment; but what and where were they? —Dust and ashes! tenants of the tomb! phantoms of the memory!

‘A vague and indescribable awe was creeping over me. I would fain have ascribed it to the thoughts of robbers, awakened by the evening’s conversation, but I felt that it was something more unusual and absurd. In a word, the long buried impressions of the nursery were reviving and asserting their power over my imagination. Every thing began to be affected by the workings of my mind. The whispering of the wind among the citron trees beneath my window had something sinister. I cast my eyes into the garden of Lindaraxa; the groves presented a gulf of shadows; the thickets had indistinct and ghastly shapes. I was glad to close the window; but my chamber itself became infected. A bat had found its way in, and flitted about my head and athwart my solitary lamp; the grotesque faces carved in the cedar ceiling seemed to mope and mow at me.

‘Rousing myself, and half smiling at this temporary weakness, I resolved to brave it, and, taking lamp in hand, sallied forth to make a tour of the ancient palace. Notwithstanding every mental exertion, the task was a severe one. The rays of my lamp extended to but a little distance around me; I walked as it were in a mere halo of light, and all beyond was thick darkness. The vaulted corridors were as caverns; the vaults of the halls were lost in gloom; what unseen foe might not be lurking before or behind me; my own shadow playing about the walls, and the echoes of my own footsteps disturbed me.

‘In this excited state, as I was traversing the great Hall of Ambassadors, there were added real sounds to these conjectural fancies. Low moans and indistinct ejaculations seemed to rise as it were from beneath my feet; I paused and listened. They then appeared to resound from without the tower. Sometimes they resembled the howlings of an animal, at others they were stifled shrieks, mingled with articulate ravings. The thrilling effect of these sounds in that still hour and singular place, destroyed all inclination to continue my lonely perambulation. I returned to my chamber with more alacrity than I had sallied forth, and drew my breath more freely when once more within its walls, and the door bolted behind me.

‘When I awoke in the morning, with the sun shining in at my window, and lighting up every part of the building with its cheerful and truth-telling beams, I could scarcely recall the shadows and fancies conjured up by the gloom of the preceding night; or believe that the scenes around me, so naked and apparent, could have been clothed with such imaginary horrors.

‘Still, the dismal howlings and ejaculations I had heard, were not ideal ; but they were soon accounted for, by my handmaid Dolores ; being the ravings of a poor maniac, a brother of her aunt, who was subject to violent paroxysms, during which he was confined in a vaulted room beneath the Hall of Ambassadors.’

The tales, though not to us, as we have said, the most agreeable portion of the work, and though, in fact, not distinguished by any particular power or point, are written in the correct and graceful style peculiar to the author, and will be read with pleasure, were it only for the beauty of the language, which is in fact their principal merit. The Moor's Legacy and Governor Manco are perhaps the best. Prince Ahmed, or the Pilgrim of Love, though evidently among the more elaborate, appears to us somewhat less successful than the others, which is rather remarkable, considering the attractive character of the subject, and the profusion of machinery which the author has brought into action. It would give us pleasure to adorn our pages with one of these narratives, but we deem it unnecessary for the purpose of making them known, as they are doubtless already familiar to our readers. On the whole, we consider the work before us as equal in literary value to any of the others of the same class, with the exception of the Sketch Book, and we should not be surprised, if it were read as extensively as even that very popular production. We hope to have it in our power, at no remote period, to announce a continuation of the series, which we are satisfied will bear, in the bookseller's phrase, several more volumes.

We cannot conclude without expressing the satisfaction with which we have learned, that our gifted and amiable countryman intends in future to fix his residence among us. By identifying his existence completely with the fortunes of this great and rising nation, we think that he will best consult his own happiness, and his permanent literary fame. Whatever may be at present the comparative value of the suffrages of foreign and domestic readers to an American writer, the time is not very distant, when that of the latter will be decidedly the more important ; and it never could be given with real heartiness and good will to one who had virtually abjured his country. Nor, however cordially Mr. Irving may have been received in Europe, could he ever have ceased to be a pilgrim and a sojourner there : a situation which, though temporarily pleasant enough under some circumstances, holds out but a cold and

cheerless prospect for declining life. The open and hearty welcome which his fellow-citizens have given him, shows that he is best appreciated where he is best known. His reception at New York was the fairest triumph that has yet been accorded to literary desert in the New World. It proved, notwithstanding the idle assertions of our foreign detractors, that we are not a people given over exclusively to the love of dollars, or the furious strife for political distinction, but that we possess, in as high a degree as any of our contemporaries, the taste for intellectual occupations and pleasures. Mr. Irving has returned to us in the full vigor of life and health; younger, as his friends think, than when he left us seventeen years ago; but yet old enough not to be tempted from his chosen employments by any of those visions of success and glory to be obtained in others, that might cheat the fancy of a less experienced man. He has found in his literary pursuits a source of profit, that places him above the necessity of laboring with any motive, but that of promoting, as far as possible, his own reputation, and the public entertainment and instruction. His return, and the gratifying testimonials of respect and esteem which it has called forth from his countrymen, will give him new inspiration. His foot is now on his native heath. When he visits again the well-remembered scenes of his early adventures, associated in his mind with the delightful images of youthful love and fame,—when he sees the lofty Kaatskill putting on, as of old, his white ruff of ambient clouds, and the noble Hudson rushing with his world of waters to the ocean, between the busy streets of Manhattan on the one hand and the classic shades of Communipaw on the other,—he will find his powers refreshed and redoubled, and will feel himself encouraged, perhaps, to more successful efforts than any that he ever made before. We cordially invite him to enter on the new career of honorable labor and well-earned distinction, which awaits him on this side the water; and, as far as our feeble suffrage can give him any aid, we shall be truly happy, as occasion may offer, to cheer him from time to time upon his progress.